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Author(s): August B. Hollingshead
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of thought not derived from science itself.

In the end, Weber emphasized that the scientific interest aroused by a *factum* is always identical with the question of whether or not it is *relevant to value*. Without the objective principle of relevance to value and the concept of adequate causation, an historical or sociological understanding and interpretation of sociocultural events is impossible. Consequently, *Wertbeziehung* (relevance to value) is merely a logical interpretation of that specific scientific interest which determines the selection of problems for research. The unit of the value-relevant, of the qualitative multiplicity of the "unique" parts of social reality, is the historical individual. For if it is the individual who gives value to material, then it seemed only logical for Weber to focus his interest upon the overt action of man. Thus by limiting his observations to intentional actions, Weber assumed that he had found the basis for his methodology.

One may state that Weber's influence on German social sciences, although of short duration, has been a clarifying excitation. His stress on value-free research must be understood historically; he opposed men like Treitschke, Ranke, Knies, and all professors who, in his opinion, used university chairs for the propagation of their private opinions, their "bouquets of cultural ideals," and their *Weltanschauung*.

For students of methodology and social theory, these scholarly translations are a valuable addition to the translations and interpretations of Weber's works by Talcott Parsons, and H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills.

RICHARD O. NAHRENDORF
Drake University

Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort: An Introduction to Human Ecology. By GEORGE KINGSLEY ZIPF. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Press, Inc., 1949. 573 pp. $6.50.

This is a singularly challenging book for all social scientists because of its serious "scientific" attempt to establish the validity of one cosmic principle governing all action in the "life process" of individuals, groups, societies, and cultures. Its subject matter cuts across anthropology, demography, economics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, psychology, semantics, and sociology—to mention only the primary fields of interest to social scientists. Final evaluation should properly be undertaken by a panel of experts. From its title sociologists may legitimately expect to find here a systematic treatment of human behavior in terms of its ecological relationships. This expectation will not be realized. Zipf ignores the work of sociologists in this field during the last quarter of a century; only occasionally is the subject mentioned; and the sub-title is grossly misleading.

If the reader is equipped with formal logic, mathematics, and statistics, however, and if he has the fortitude and patience to thread his way through pages of turgid and often irrelevant argument, he can judge Zipf's grandiose claim to the discovery of a unifying principle underlying all living existences, individual and social. Zipf's argument is built upon a series of five hypothetical assumptions, each of which stems logically from the preceding one, resting ultimately on the postulate that all events in time-space are governed by the same laws of nature.

The formulation of a series of hypothetical postulates as a guide to explanation of events in time-space is one kind of activity; the empirical demonstration of their validity is another. In the development of science one necessarily complements the other. But before hypotheses can be elevated to the status of theories, they must be objectively verified. Thus the crucial issue in Zipf's work turns on the question: Has he demonstrated the validity of the Principle of Least Effort? An answer to this question demands consideration of the "tool" he has used, the way in which he uses it, and its implications.

Zipf postulates that all "living process," either individual or collective, is subject to opposite forces of Diversification and Unification. Thus the study of the action and reaction of the two forces in a time-space field is one of dynamics. These two forces operate, the author assumes, in a rectilinear plane. Postulate 4—the "Singleness of the Superlative"—tells us that in a problem of dynamics there can be but one superlative. Therefore he focuses attention upon discovery of a single principle which will explain the effects on events of the Force of Unification *versus* the Force of Diversification. The fruit of this search is the Principle of Least Effort, which is defined to mean that "each individual will adopt a course of action that will involve the expenditure of the probably least average of his work." (By definition, "least effort." p. 543)

Zipf argues that the Force of Unification acts in the direction of decreasing all possible events in time-space to one, and that the Force of Diversification acts to increase the number of

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possible events in time-space while decreasing their frequency toward one. This being the case, he believes that number and frequency will be parameters of events in time-space of any instance of "life process" selected for study. Thus study of the "life process" reduces itself to analysis of rank-frequency distributions which uncover the balance between the forces of Unification and Diversification—the Principle of Least Effort. Do the empirical data presented support his argument? In a few cases, they do; in most cases they do not.

During the last twenty years Zipf has made strenuous attempts to convince his colleagues in linguistics of the reality of the rabbits he pulls from his hat. Some among them have accepted his prestidigitations at face value, but others have looked more closely and perceived that, like the best magicians, he brings forth from the hat only what he himself has placed therein before beginning his act. The argument in this book is the sleekest and plumpest stage rabbit yet produced, and the effort quite obviously was enormous. Could it be that in trying so hard he does violence to his own cosmic principle?

AUGUST B. HOLLINGSHEAD
Yale University

Social Class in America: A Manual of Procedure for the Measurement of Social Status. by W. LLOYD WARNER, MARCHIA MEEKER, and KENNETH EELLS. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1949. xiv, 274 pp. $4.25.

This book is an addition to the techniques of research in stratification. It is not a study of the nature or functioning of social class. Beginning with a popular summary of some studies of class structure, the book moves to a description of two related methods for rating the class position of individuals in the United States and for stratifying a community according to its class structure. The description of these methods is the heart of the book.

The first method stratifies communities and gives individual class ratings through "Evaluated Participation" (E. P.). The method is based on the knowledge that an individual's prestige position limits his participation in some areas of the community and permits or coerces his participation in other areas. It represents a composite of six techniques. These, in turn, are procedures for using interview and group membership data in stratification.

The discussion of E. P. is most helpful in its exploration of some problems connected with the use of each subsidiary technique. It does not present, however, a clean, operational description of how to use these techniques without involving the imponderables of "artistic" judgment.

It is relevant to compare the E. P. method of stratification here presented with that described by Hollingshead in *Elmtown's Youth.* (It appears that the data in both books are derived from the same community, and that the present authors have made extensive use of Hollingshead's interview material.) There are striking similarities between Hollingshead's ranking techniques and those of Warner and his colleagues. Hollingshead has pushed further toward a clear, step-by-step account of one of the procedures; the Warner group is more comprehensive, but less precise.

Perhaps the major contribution of the present book is the Index of Status Characteristics (I. S. C.). In its revised form, the I. S. C. is an index consisting of the sum of weighted subindices of occupation, house-type, dwelling area, and source of income. The authors find that it represents a considerable improvement over class stratification through simple occupational ranking; that it correlates at .972 with class rankings based on E. P. results for 303 families in a small, mid-Western community. As the writers warn, it appears likely that the subindices on which the I. S. C. is based will have to be re-validated for each new community in which it is used if a high degree of accuracy is desired. Re-validation is no simple matter, for it involves specialised methods and skilled judgments. This probably will limit the immediate, valid use of the I. S. C. by school principals, businessmen, personnel managers, and others to whom the book commends it.

The scoring of the I. S. C., once established, is adequately covered. The uses to which E. P. and I. S. C. may be put in social science and public affairs, and the problems of stratifying a community, of sampling to get potential E. P. rating judges, and of establishing the basic indices on which the I. S. C. depends are handled in a less satisfactory way.

It seems proper to remark here that this is another recent book supporting the argument for a well-edited, social science monograph series which would make available to the profession longer contributions at a reasonable cost.

G. E. SWANSON
University of Michigan

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